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# Description of a Journey and Visit to the Pawnee Indians

who live on the Platte River, a tributary to the Missouri,  
70 miles from its mouth by Brn. Gottlieb F. Oehler  
and David Z. Smith, April 22 — May 18, 1851,  
to which is added

A Description of the Manners and Customs  
of the Pawnee Indians by Dr. D. Z. Smith.



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to visit  
California



## DESCRIPTION

OF A JOURNEY AND VISIT TO THE PAWNEE INDIANS, WHO LIVE ON THE PLATTE RIVER, A TRIBUTARY OF THE MISSOURI. 70 MILES FROM ITS MOUTH, BY THE BRN. GOTTLIEB F. OEHLER AND DAVID Z. SMITH. (April 22d—May 18th, 1851.)

Having in the course of the winter written letters of inquiry to Mr. Samuel Allis, teacher of a government-school for Pawnee children, and Major Barrow, U. S. agent for the Pawnees, both residing at Bellevue, and having received letters from both, of an encouraging nature, we left Westfield on the morning of April 22d, on our intended trip. Br. Paul Oehler accompanied us to Weston, in order to take the wagon back, which was to convey us thither. Passing by the Baptist mission-station, Briggs' Vale, where we called in a few minutes, we soon struck the prairie, which we kept till our arrival at Fort Leavenworth, about twenty-four miles from Westfield. This is a very pretty prairie, undulating, and at places quite broken, with here and there a high bluff or mound, rising above the surrounding country. "Pilot Bluff," a few miles from Leavenworth, stands picturesque in the prairie, and affords a beautiful prospect. We passed a company of infantry in the prairie, traveling from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Gibson. The quartermaster at the fort, Mr. Ogden, with whom Br. Oehler was previously acquainted, received us very courteously, and gave us a letter of introduction to the quartermaster at Fort Kearney, in case we should be obliged to go that way on our return home and need any assistance.—Fort Leavenworth is eligibly situated on a high prairie, near the bank of the Missouri, about 35 miles above the mouth of Kansas River. It is a place of considerable business, in the way of furnishing military stores for the more western forts. At the wharf a large storehouse has been built by the Government for the purpose of depositing military stores. The premises are kept in a very neat and cleanly condition, and a large garden has been prepared near by, for the soldiers to raise vegetables for their use. After crossing the Missouri on a horse-boat, which is kept here at the expense of the Government, we proceeded towards Weston, situated about five miles above. The first part of our road lay through the bottom, in wet weather almost impassable on account of the mud, but at present dry, though rather rough. The latter half of the road lay along the river, on the side of

the bluff, which here comes close up to the river. Along the road, we noticed many sugar-maple trees. Towards evening we arrived at Weston, a place of considerable trade, having about 1,700 inhabitants. We had expected to wait at Weston for a steamboat, that had been advertised at St. Louis for the upper Missouri, but as she had at the latest dates deferred the time of her departure from St. Louis, and the river was in a very low stage, so that it was doubtful, whether after her arrival here, she could run up any further; and hearing of a four-horse passenger coach, running from Weston to Council Bluffs in four days, which was to leave early in the morning, we concluded to take that, April 23rd. Early at four o'clock in the morning we started from Weston in the stage. Leaving the river to our left, we traveled upon the bluffs, which here run close up to the river, the bottom of the Missouri being on the other side. The country through which we passed is a broken country, heavily timbered and with a rich soil. At 8 o'clock we arrived at Bloomington, a little village about sixteen miles N. W. of Weston. On account of the unusual number of passengers, twenty-one in number, the stage proprietor had to furnish an extra four-horse coach, to accommodate all. This being the place of breakfast, the number rather took our worthy host by surprise, and it seemed to give him no small anxiety to entertain so large a company. However, by 11 o'clock we had all breakfasted, and were soon again in motion, the road still continuing for about seven miles on the bluffs, when we again descended into the bottom, which widens here on this side of the river, leaving the bluffs more to our right.

We now traveled over a very rich bottom prairie about seven miles to St. Joseph, the road on both sides lined with farms. The soil here is extremely rich, though inclined to be wet in the rainy season. St. Joseph is a thriving town, laid out only a few years ago, and numbers about 3,000 inhabitants; situated on a bluff on the right bank of the Missouri. Here we were informed that Major Barrow, the Pawnee agent, had left that very day in a boat on his way to St. Louis. The drinking of intoxicating beverage is carried on to a great extent in these frontier towns, and it is a common sight to meet with drunken men in the streets.

After an hour's rest at St. Joseph, we resumed our journey for Savannah, our stopping-place for the night, fourteen miles distant. The roads being very dusty, traveling by stage at present is rather disagreeable. We passed through a fertile and well-timbered country, with neat cottages and beautiful farms scattered on both sides of the road. About sunset we arrived at Savannah. The country around this place is the



prettiest that we have yet seen in the West. The town is situated in a rolling prairie, with some timber on all sides in view. The whole prairie being occupied by the town and adjacent fields, checkered off by fences into lots of a few acres each, gives it the appearance of an old-country settlement, though it was commenced only about fourteen years ago. Land here sells from fifteen to twenty dollars per acre. The village numbers about 800 inhabitants. The houses are mostly one-story frame, neatly painted white, with brick chimneys, surrounded by neat yards and grass-plots. Almost every house is furnished with a lightning-rod, which struck us as something rather unusual in this western country. The whole scenery around reminded us forcibly of the landscape around Bethlehem, Pa. In the village three churches, all of brick, have been erected, belonging to the O. S. and N. S. Presbyterians, and Campbellites. The courthouse, a brick edifice, stands in the centre of the town, in an open square. A few days ago two destructive fires occurred in the village, consuming a whole row of houses facing the square, and destroying property to the amount of 20,000 dollars, supposed to be the work of incendiaries. We were detained here two days, the coach from above, in which we were to proceed, instead of arriving on the evening of the 23rd, did not come in till the evening of the 25th.

26th. At length, after breakfast, we were enabled to leave Savannah and proceed on our journey. Our traveling company was very disagreeable, being shockingly profane. In traveling in these parts one might almost suppose that all the inhabitants were given to profanity, and the name of God and of the Savior is used in the most revolting manner. As we traveled on the country continued more or less broken, the timber becoming scarcer the further North we proceeded. Oregon, through which we passed in the afternoon, is a newly settled but thriving town, with a tolerably populous neighborhood. Soon after leaving Oregon we left the bluffs to our right and descended into a most beautiful bottom country, bordering on the Missouri River. The bottom is about ten or twelve miles wide, quite level, bounded by a line of high bluffs to the right hand, at the base of which our road lay. About five or six miles off to our left a strip of timber (the only to be seen) from four to five miles wide skirted the river all the rest of the bottom, and the neighboring high bluffs were one continued prairie. The soil is splendid, but all the most eligible sites are already occupied by settlers, who hold their claims at enormous prices. Timber is very scarce, and so is stone. Not a pebble is to be seen either on the bluffs, or in the bottom. The settlers are obliged to resort to ditching and mud-fencing. This is done

by digging two ditches in a line about six feet apart, and piling up the sod and ground on the intervening space to form a wall. At 4 o'clock we arrived at Jackson's, thirty-two miles from Savannah, the end of our day's ride.

27th. Left Jackson's after breakfast. Our company was very annoying to us, on account of their shocking profanity, but we were obliged to endure it with patience. After continuing for several miles further through the above-mentioned rich bottom prairie, we again ascended the bluffs to our right, traveling all day, mostly through hilly prairie, timber being very scarce. After a ride of about thirty miles we arrived at a little village named Linden, at 4 o'clock, P. M. Here our driver informed us that his horses (having traveled nearly forty miles to-day) were tired and worn out, and that he thought they could hardly travel any further. After tea, however, he said that he would try and take us a few miles further. We, therefore, proceeded till it was quite dark, but there being a portion of the road before us rather dangerous to travel in the dark we stopped for the night at a post office, where we were well accommodated with beds. We were now in the State of Iowa, having crossed the line between that state and Missouri a few miles back.

28th. Early at 4 o'clock we were again stirring. By sunrise we came to the valley or bottom of the Nishnebottona, which river we crossed on a wooden toll-bridge, newly erected. After breakfast we again struck the bluffs and traveled all day through an extensive prairie country, broken, very fertile, but lacking timber. The country here has been but lately settled, but it would be more thickly inhabited if timber were more plenty. This is all "claimed," and the claims are held at an enormous price. To-day we saw many houses covered with prairie-sod, on account of the scarcity of board timber; the day previous we had already passed many houses, the chimneys of which were made of prairie-sod, which seems to be quite durable. The further north we proceeded the scarcer the timber became along the water courses. Some of the streams run through the prairie with no timber lining them. We had reached the end of our journey, to within five miles, when we took in a way-passenger, a Mormon, who was from Ohio, traveling to see his brethren of the faith at Kanessville, a few miles above Trading Pt., at the Council Bluffs. We soon got into a conversation with him, and, thinking from our inquiries that we were inquirers after the Mormon faith, he proceeded to give us an account of their religious opinions, telling us about the three apostacies from the time of Noah to the time when the great prophet, Joe Smith, arose in 1830! These three apos-

tacies, according to their opinion, are: 1st, the general apostasy of all the nations of the earth to idolatry; 2dly, the apostasy of the Jews, and 3dly the appostacy of the different sects calling themselves christians, etc.

About sunset we arrived at Trading Point, the commencement of a continuation of bluffs on both sides of the river, called "Council Bluffs." On the opposite side of the river is Bellevue, the residence of Mr. Allis, who keeps a government-school for Pawnee children, and of the Pawnee, Otoe and Omahaw Agent, Maj. Barrow; there are also here two trading establishments, and blacksmith-shops for the Indians; about a mile below, on the same side of the river, is the Mission Station of the General Assembly's (O. S.) Board, among the Otoes and Omahaws, under the superintendence of Mr. E. McKinney. Immediately after our arrival at Trading Point we had a conversation with Mr. Allis, who happened to be on that side of the river. He told us that he and Mr. McKinney had been expecting our arrival, and that the Pawnees, to whom he had mentioned our intention of coming to see them, were anxiously awaiting us.

29th. During the night we experienced one of those sudden changes common to this country; in the morning when we awoke the wind was blowing a gale, and it was snowing very fast. About 10 o'clock we thought we would venture to cross the Missouri to the opposite side; the attempt was accompanied with great peril to our lives. The wind beat the water into the skiff, the ferryman's hands became so benumbed that he could hardly pull the oars any more, and by the combined effect of the gale and current we drifted about a mile below the usual landing-place. Mr. Allis stood watching on shore, ready to help us, and as soon as the skiff touched the bank he held to it, and having fastened it he assisted us with our trunks up the steep bank. Having proceeded to his house, we were glad to warm our numb limbs by the fire. The provisions, for the accommodation of Mr. Allis' family and Pawnee children, are wretched, right on the bank of the Missouri. The dwelling which is occupied by them was formerly a trading establishment and is almost in ruins. The family, besides ten or twelve Pawnee children, and several white children, are obliged to live in one small room, the only one hardly fit to be occupied, about eighteen feet square, which serves for parlor, sitting-room, and kitchen, and a sleeping apartment for the children above. Mr. and Mrs. Allis are devoted missionaries. They were among the first missionaries of the American Board, who nearly twenty years ago commenced a mission among the Pawnees; since the abandonment of that mission a few years ago,

on account of the hostile incursions of the Sioux, they have been laboring here at Bellevue, in a most exemplary manner, for the improvement of the Pawnee children in their charge. Government allows them the sum of 500 dollars annually for the support of the school, which, however, is barely sufficient to defray their expenses. Under the most discouraging circumstances, combating with much sickness in the family, on account of the location and dilapidated condition of the buildings, they have still held out, and toiled for the good of the children under their charge, to whom they seem to have the same attachment as to children of their own. They are both becoming considerably advanced in years and begin to feel the effects of their self-denying labors. They are loth to surrender these interesting children to their heathen friends, on account of the want of necessary provisions for their future advancement, and are anxious that further efforts should be made for their benefit. At the same time they are desirous of resigning their charge as soon as they can give them up into other hands, who will seek their improvement. Government is unwilling to make any further provision for better buildings for the Pawnee school here, but would probably be willing to furnish the necessary means for the same in the Pawnee country, whither, however, Mr. Allis is unwilling to go on account of the check they formerly received from the Sioux. After dinner Mr. Allis accompanied us to the house of Mr. Sharpee, who has been extensively trading with the Indian tribes in these parts for the last twenty years, and who expressed his satisfaction at the object for which we had arrived. He said that some of the Pawnees had lately expressed their uneasiness lest we might not come, but that he had given them the assurance that we would arrive in a few days, and he was therefore the more rejoiced, since what he had told them had now come to pass. On our way to Mr. Sharpee's we met several Pawnees, who, when Mr. Allis announced to them that we were the men whom they were expecting, came up to us in the most friendly manner, and taking us by the hand, gave us a hearty shake, saying: "Lo-wa! Tapooska;" *i.e.*, "good," or "how do you do, teacher." We next proceeded to the Presbyterian mission-station, about a mile distant, where we were to make our stay, till our preparations for visiting the Pawnees should have been consummated. The mission-houses are pleasantly situated on a high bluff facing the Missouri River, with a bottom prairie about a mile wide from bluff to river. The level on which the houses stand extends about half a mile in the rear, with a gradual ascent, till it meets another line of bluffs rising still higher. The houses were originally enclosed by pickets, which,



however, are decaying and falling down, and it is probably the intention of the missionaries to remove them altogether, as such fortifications, though they may guard against depredations of the Indians, still have a tendency of creating prejudices on their part. Our reception at the mission was very cordial, and we had reason for thankfulness to the Lord in providing such kind friends for us. The superintendent of this mission is the Rev. E. McKinney, who previously to his commencing the mission among the Otoes and Omahaws, had been laboring among the Creeks and Choctaws. They have at present about thirty-five children and youth in the institution, Otoes and Omahaws, and a few Puncaws and Pawnees. On our introduction to the children, the Pawnee children pushed themselves in advance of all the rest, in order to be the first in shaking hands with us, thinking they had the best right to us, who were going to visit their people. The two tribes, the Otoes and Omahaws, among whom this mission is located, are still, like all the western prairie tribes in their originally savage state, not having as yet, like the eastern tribes of Indians on the North American continent, made any advancement in civilization, until within a few years having lived remote from the good as well as the evil influences of the whites. The greater part of the year they roam, like the other prairie Indians, over the extensive prairies on this side of the Rocky Mountains, chasing the buffalo, which is the same to them as the seal is to the Greenlander. Their proximity to the whites, however, and the facilities afforded them for obtaining intoxicating liquors, during the short time that they remain at their villages, has latterly had a demoralizing and degenerating effect upon them, and the counteracting influence of the gospel seems as yet to have made no visible impression upon any of them. Still the missionaries, who are laboring here, are sowing the seed in tears, trusting to the promise of our Lord: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." And surely, when we look back at the labors of our first missionaries among the heathen, and consider how the Lord eventually crowned their toils, who will doubt His ability and willingness to do the same thing at the present day, when even the heathen tribes are begging to have missionaries among them—an instance of which we witnessed at a council, which Mr. McKinney held with a delegation of the principal chiefs of the Puncaws, a tribe of wild Indians living about 150 miles up the Missouri, who had come to Council Bluffs expressly for the purpose of soliciting missionaries. The following is a speech which the principal speaker made to Mr. McKinney:



"My Father,—I wished to see you a long time already. I am now here. My heart is glad that I can now at length behold your face. My heart is now as clear as this pleasant and bright day. I see you do a great deal for these children here, and I wish you would do something for my people. I am a fool,—I have no sense,—but you have knowledge. You have the words of the Great Spirit, and I wish you therefore to come to us, and teach us."

Besides these, it is reported by traders, that the Sioux (Soos), a powerful tribe numbering about 25,000 souls, living North of the Puncaws, and other tribes to the North are also anxious to have missionaries among them. What a wide field for missionary labor! And still we must hear the remark so often made by christians in the East, so painful to our ears: "There is no use in having missionaries among the *Indians*—no good can be effected among the *Indians*—better send the missionaries who are laboring among the *Indians*, and appropriate the funds spent for missions and schools among *them*, to some *other* heathen field." From what we have witnessed on our excursion to Council Bluffs, and our subsequent visit to the Pawnees, we confidently express the opinion that we can nowhere expect heathen nations, with the contracted ideas that these people have of the nature of the gospel, to be more anxious to have missionaries among them. And we cannot otherwise than denounce expressions like the above, as not breathing the spirit of our Lord and Savior, who has enjoined the command upon his followers to "go and preach his gospel to *every creature*." Furthermore, from what we have seen and heard, we firmly believe that the Lord is preparing a wide door for the preaching of his gospel among the Western and North Western prairie tribes, and the Macedonian cry is ringing in the land: "Come over and help us!" We solemnly put the question to such objectors to our Indian missions: Where lies the fault that so little has been done in latter years by the Brethren among the Indians? that our missions among the Indians have been stagnant—yes, we may truly say, retrograding for so many years? Shall it be attributed to the Indians, who, as we have seen, are truly anxious to receive the gospel? Or shall we admit, that the blessed gospel of our Savior has not that power over the Indians that it has over other nations? that there is a deficiency in the gospel in not being able to subdue the obdurate heart of the red man? Shall we doubt for a moment the incapacity of the Lord in blessing the faithful preaching of his word with the outpourings of his Spirit? Or is there a deficiency in the plan of salvation that Indians should be excluded from the glorious privileges of the

same? Or have we forgotten the history of our first missions among them, the piety and consistent christian lives of our first Indian converts, their persecutions from their heathen brethren, and their sufferings even unto death for the sake of the gospel? If we wish to find where the fault lies we must look for it in *our own hearts*. *There* it is. *There* is a lack of that missionary spirit which actuated our forefathers! *There* is a lack of that true Spirit of our Savior, who in his missionary capacity to a *world* of sinners has set us a pattern to follow. We have sadly degenerated, and the spirit of the world has taken a powerful hold upon our minds; and it is meet for us all *seriously, earnestly, prayerfully*, to cry: "Turn us unto thee, oh! Lord, and we shall be turned; *renew our days as of old!*"—

In order to make our visit from Bellevue to the Pawnees, it was necessary that we should be well supplied with provisions, as the Pawnees were at present very much straitened for the necessaries of life. These Mr. McKinney kindly volunteered to furnish us with, besides sufficient extra to make a small feast of cracker and coffee for the chiefs of each village. Mr. Allis was recommended to us by all as the best interpreter, and on account of his acquaintance with the Pawnees, and having their good will, it was altogether an advantage to us to secure his kind offices, which he was willing to afford. Mr. Sharpee promised to furnish us two mules, and Mr. Reed, the farmer at the mission, gave us the use of his light two-horse wagon. Thus before the close of the week our arrangements were made to commence our journey to the Pawnees the following Monday, May 5th.

Sunday, May the 4th.—We were both called upon to take an active part in the meetings to-day at the Presbyterian mission. As it is very unusual for any adult Indians to attend these meetings on the Lord's day, the exercises are conducted altogether in the English language. In the forenoon there is Sunday school for the children of the institution. At about 2 o'clock, P. M., there is public preaching, which, besides all at the mission, Mr. Allis and his Pawnee children, and some of the white families from Bellevue, attend. In the evening there is a meeting in which a discourse is addressed particularly to the Indian children, but which is attended by all. In these evening meetings different scripture truths are presented to the children in a simple narrative style, and not only the children themselves, but also those employed in the mission, seem to be very much interested in these instructive meetings.

In the afternoon br. Oehler, in company with Mr. Reed, the farmer of the mission, visited the village of the Omahaws,

about four miles distant. Their village being similar to those of the Pawnees, we will refer the reader to a subsequent page for a description.

5th.—A considerable part of the forenoon having been spent before the mules were caught on the prairie and brought in, and Mr. Sharpee promising, if we would wait till the following day, he would accompany us to the Pawness, in order to inquire of them whether any of their young men had stolen a horse he had lost a few nights ago, Mr. Allis and ourselves determined to wait for him, as he had an extensive knowledge of the Indians, and of travelling on the "plains," as the large prairies are here called, and might on that account be of great service to us. An under-chief of the Loup Pawnees, by the name of Gatarritakutz (Bix Axe) was also waiting, in order to accompany us.

6th.—At length we were ready to commence our journey from here to the Pawnees, about 9 o'clock, accompanied by the best wishes of our kind friends at the mission, and with the encouraging Daily Word: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David," (Is. 55:3) with the Doctrinal text: "There is *one* body and *one* spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling: *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all." (Eph. 4:4-6.) "In doctrine and in practice one,—We'll love and serve the Lord alone;—With one accord sound forth His praise,—Till we shall see His face."

The ideas of leaving the abodes of civilization, and travelling, unarmed and unguarded by a competent force of men, in the land of numerous savages, had a tendency to cause every dependence upon an arm of flesh to vanish, while we could put our confidence upon the all-powerful arm of our Savior, in whose cause we had undertaken this journey among wild untutored barbarians, and who watches over his people *everywhere*. (Ps. 139.)

Our course to-day was N. W. and W., taking the great road travelled by the emigrants, on leaving the Bluffs for Oregon, the Salt Lake, or California.

The road was very dry and dusty, and the wind coming from the West blew the dust in our faces, by which we were very much incommoded. After leaving Bellevue, and ascending the bluff, which brought us on the level of the high prairie, a beautiful prospect presented itself. Before us, as far as the eye could reach, was the wide prairie extending to the horizon; on our right were clumps of timber skirting both banks of the Missouri, bounded by the bluffs on the other side of the river,

with the Mormon settlement of Kaneshville, beautifully spread out before us, situated in one of the valleys between the bluffs about six or eight miles distant, beyond the river; on our left, in the middle ground, lay the valleys of the Great and Little Papilion, with the Omahaw village, like a cluster of potatoe hills, situated on the opposite bank, near their confluence, with here and there a clump of timber along both streams, while far away in the distance could plainly be distinguished the valley of the Platte, with the timber, growing on its numerous islands.

After proceeding some five miles in the prairie, we met a large train of Oregon emigrants, who, by some interested person, had been induced to turn about, in order to take a road, which would lead them to another ferry on the Elkhorn river, (a branch of the Platte,) and although Mr. Sharpee represented to them that the road they had been travelling was the better, still his representations were of no avail, and they preferred to travel a route 15 or 20 miles further than ours, and much worse bridged across the mudholes. A large company of wild Indians (Omahaws) was hovering on horseback around the train, watching a favorable opportunity to steal something, or perchance, should a beef stray some distance from the rest, (a good opportunity for which was given by their turning back again,) to drive it behind a bluff and slay it.

The sight of a large train of 20 or 30 wagons, travelling in long single file, with four or more yoke of oxen or cows attached to each, is really picturesque; and we had frequently the opportunity on our journey of beholding such a long line of white-covered wagons, presenting, at a distance of several miles, a beautiful appearance. During the day we passed several trains, destined for Oregon, Salt Lake, or California. In the Oregon trains we observed many *cows* yoked in teams, besides numbers of them driven along loose; milchcows commanding a high price in Oregon.

When the sun had nearly reached the western horizon, we arrived at our camping ground,—a small clump of trees on the Great Papilion,—a spot generally selected by the emigrants, at the end of the first day's travel, west of the Bluffs. The animals in our *train*, consisting of a horse, a pony, belonging to our Pawnee friend, and two mules, were first driven to the water, of which they stood in great need. The horse was then hobbled, *i.e.*, a rope tied around both forelegs, so short, as merely to enable it to get along slowly to graze, and to hinder it from straying too far away. The pony and the two mules were secured by means of a rope about 30 feet long, tied around the neck of each, and dragging behind them, so as to facilitate



the catching of them again on the following morning. We then pitched our tent for the night, and having built a fire, proceeded to prepare some coffee, which was peculiarly acceptable after a fatiguing day's travel. Our store of provisions consisted of about a bushel of ship crackers, a boilt ham, and some molasses in an India rubber flask, all of which were provided by our kind friend, Mr. McKinney. We had hardly camped before the trains commenced pouring in for the night, and even late in the night they continued to arrive, so that by morning the place was covered with tents and wagons, and swarming with people, horses, mules and cattle.

7th.—At an early hour we were again moving, in order to reach the Elkhorn Ferry before any of the trains should take the precedence, whereby we would have been detained. We had first to cross the Papilion on a bridge, and as it was very narrow, and the road leading to it very steep, we were obliged to unharness the mules from the wagon, lest they might, by pushing one another, precipitate the wagon and themselves into the stream and mud below. The wagon was then pulled across the bridge by hand. Ascending the opposite hill, we were again on the high prairie. Before us, twelve or fifteen miles distant, could be discovered the timber of the Elkhorn, which we expected to cross before noon;—to our right we could yet perceive the timber of the Missouri, and the Old Council Bluffs, where formerly there was a fort for the protection of the traders;—and to our left the timber of the Platte.—

Arrived at the Elkhorn, we saw a considerable number of Pawnees, who all appeared glad at our coming to visit them. Here we learnt that a slight affray had taken place the day before, between some Pawnees and a train of emigrants. The readers of the Miscellany have perhaps read of such cases in the newspapers, headed: "Depredation of the *Pawnees* (or some other Indians) upon a train of emigrants," and the like, where the blame is generally attached to the Indians. I think it is due to the Indians to state here that the fault does not always lie with them, but very often with the whites. The road of the emigrants lies through the country belonging to the Indians;—their hunting-grounds are traversed by the long lines of white-covered wagons, and the buffaloes, the principal subsistence of the Indians, are thereby chased away to more distant and more secluded pastures, perhaps to regions where it would be unsafe for them to hunt, on account of other tribes inimical to them; and they have thereby been reduced to poverty and want. For all these privations they have been promised presents, as a compensation, from our Government, but thus far they have received nothing. So when the emigrants



are passing through their country, they frequently apply to them for tobacco, or some other small presents. It seems that in the above instance, while the Pawnees were hovering around the train, they were refused a present, and one of the men, with the ox-whip, struck an Indian, who came near, which, of course, roused the feelings of the Indians. These accordingly drove off a beef or two, which were then despatched.—

The Elkhorn at this place is a deep and rapid stream, about 20 yards wide. Two French halfbreeds are living here, in order to keep a ferry for the emigrants.—Having passed over the Elkhorn, our road lay across a bottom prairie extending between the Elkhorn and Platte rivers. We now turned off from the wagon road, taking the village for our landmark; without any track across the prairie, and soon arrived on the north bank of the Platte.—The grass being somewhat more advanced in the bottom than on the high bluff on the opposite side, where the village is situated, the Pawnees had turned their ponies to graze in the bottom, watched by the women and children.—Many women were also engaged in digging for roots with their hoes, provisions being at present very scarce among them. We were soon surrounded by a crowd of young men, women and children, who by their smiling countenances seemed to bid us welcome.—It is difficult to describe our feelings on the present occasion. We were now in sight of the village, where the people lived, whom we had come to visit, in order to give them the opportunity of accepting or rejecting the offer of having Missionaries to live among them, to lead them to the Savior of sinners. A wide stream, over a mile across, separated us from the object of our journey, and could not be crossed without getting assistance from the very people, for whose benefit we had come. From the conversation of Mr. Allis and Mr. Sharpee with the Indians there seemed to be some difficulty in getting help, originating in a jealousy existing between the Chief in our company and the principal Chief of the village. Meantime it commenced raining, and a strong, chilly wind was blowing, which forced us to wrap ourselves in our blankets. In this perplexity nearly an hour was spent. At length a messenger was despatched across the river to inform the principal chief of the village, Siskatuppe, of our arrival, with the request that he would send us some men to assist us to cross. After another hour's patient waiting we were cheered by seeing the chief with about twenty men coming to our help.—The ford of the river is only about four feet at the deepest places, but what makes this river peculiarly perilous in crossing is the shifting quicksand at the bottom, so that, while crossing, it is necessary to keep constantly moving;—for

the moment a person stops he begins to sink on account of the uncertain foothold.—Our baggage was placed upon the backs of Pawnees, who immediately started off with their load. The mules having been unharnessed, and the harness placed in the wagon, a long rope was tied from the end of the tongue of the wagon to each single-tree. The Pawnees then took hold of the rope, while some pushed behind at the wagon, and thus proceeded into the river. Mr. Sharpee kindly offered br. Smith his horse, while he and br. Oehler each took a mule, and Mr. Allis borrowed a pony of the Pawnees, the mounted men taking up the rear. A full half hour was consumed in crossing, and passing over two islands on our route. At length we reached the opposite bank, where we were greeted by numbers of Pawnees, who were awaiting our arrival. A difficulty which now presented itself before us was to get the wagon up the steep bluff, the sides of which had become slippery by the falling rain. To obviate this difficulty it was necessary to go nearly a mile down the river, through their cornfields, in the bottom, to a place where it was not quite so steep as elsewhere.—At length, being arrived at the village, we found, in spite of the rain, crowds standing around the chief's lodge, to receive and to welcome the misisonaries.—

Having secured everything loose about the wagon that might be liable to be stolen, and entrusted our baggage, harness and animals to the care of the chief, we entered the lodge of our host. We were not a little surprised, when we came in, to find that it was a spacious apartment, a description of which will be given at another time. We had hardly reached the place when a young gentleman in the employment of the Government arrived in company with the United States interpreter at Fort Kearney, a *black* man, who speaks the Pawnee fluently. They had travelled the whole distance, without an escort, alone;—Fort Kearney being about 150 miles further up the Platter river. This young man was sent out to the different tribes of Prairie Indians, the Pawnees among the rest, in order to invite them to attend a General Council of Tribes at Fort Laramie, to be held about the beginning of September.

While Mr. Allis and ourselves, and the above-named persons from Fort Kearney lodged with Siskatuppe, the principal chief of the village, Mr. Sharpee put up at the lodge of the chief Gatarritatkutz, who had travelled with us, and with whom he is accustomed to tarry whenever he comes to the village to trade.

After we had spent an hour in drying our clothes, smoking, and conversing with some of the chiefs and braves, a messenger arrived from Mr. Sharpee, inviting us to be present at

a feast of coffee and crackers, which he had prepared for the chiefs, during which he intended to make inquiries respecting his stolen horse. When we arrived Mr. Sharpee informed us that, as the principal men were now assembled, it would be a convenient opportunity for us to hold a council with them. We accordingly commenced by informing them of our object. The jealousy between the chiefs, however, became apparent, and after some consultation among themselves Siskatuppe intimated that some of the chiefs were not present, and as the business before us was of great importance to the whole band they ought also to be summoned. It was, therefore, resolved immediately to adjourn to his lodge, in order to receive our communications. Accordingly all the chiefs and braves having been assembled, we were informed that they were now ready to hear us. Br. Smith then in a speech, which was interpreted by Mr. Allis, informed them of the object of our visit. Hereupon Siskatuppe made an address, welcoming us in the kindest manner and hoping that we might send missionaries among them. Br. Oehler then, in an address, explained to them more particularly the object which missionaries have in view, and that it was especially our present aim among them to find out whether they were desirous not only of having their outward condition bettered, but of having the missionaries among them to teach them about a Savior, who came into this world to save us from our sins, to preach whom was our first and principal design. Several other chiefs and braves then made speeches, expressive of their satisfaction at our coming to see them, and welcoming us to live with them, promising us their protection; so that we should in no wise be hindered by any of their people; and that we might rest assured that our cattle and all other property which we might bring along with us should not be destroyed or molested by any one. Moreover, they acknowledged that they needed instruction, and that they would all be willing to listen to us. We were very much pleased with the apparent earnestness with which these remarks were made, and have no doubt that they made these promises in good faith. Before us were thus assembled the *nobility* of the village,—the chiefs and braves, besides numbers of the common people, at least 500 in all, sitting in solemn council. What a spectacle for the humble missionaries of the cross! Here were the representatives of a village, numbering at least 2,500 souls, deliberating upon the acceptance or rejection of missionaries,—holding a council, unconsciously, whether the time in the providence of the Lord had at length arrived, when they should again be instructed in the knowledge of the “*Unknown God*,” whom they, and their fath-

ers and forefathers have worshipped, though in great ignorance and superstition. O, how cheering to our hearts, when we were not merely coldly *permitted* to make our abode with them, so that they might derive from us some temporal good, in supplying their wants when hungry and destitute; but when we were hailed and welcomed among them as the "Medicine men of the Great Spirit," to have whom among them, would better their outward condition, and perhaps (as we ardently hope and pray, through the blessing of our Lord,) make them a happy and christian nation. Of what vast importance may have been this solemn hour for these people?—the future, we humbly trust, will develop many happy results from the decision of this council; but Eternity alone may reveal, that the happiness or misery of many a soul, bought by the precious blood of Jesus, was connected with the results of this occasion!

Our business with them being over, the above-named young man, in the employ of the government, also made known to them that their Great Father at Washington had invited them to a grand council of the different nations, to be held at Fort Laramie for the purpose of defining the territories of the different prairie tribes, who were also to receive presents there from him, as a compensation for the losses which they have in later years sustained, on account of the scarcity of the buffaloes, occasioned by the great emigration to the far West, etc.,—at all which they expressed their great satisfaction. After the crowd had somewhat dispersed, a dish of soup, made of hominy and beans, was placed before us, with two spoons, made of buffalo horns, in the dish. Having fasted since sunrise, we could not complain of our appetites, and the dish, though not attractive in its appearance, was soon emptied of its contents. We then prepared some coffee, and having supped, gave our chief and his family a feast of the remaining coffee, with some crackers and slices of ham. We had hardly finished, (much time was not consumed in washing our dishes,) when a messenger arrived, inviting us to a feast, which one of the chiefs had prepared for us. When we arrived, and had seated ourselves on mats around the fire, (for there are no chairs in a Pawnee lodge,) a dish of soup, made of corn, was again placed before us. As our appetites had previously been satiated, we could merely partake of a few spoonfuls, to please our kind host. We had hardly entered into a conversation when an invitation came from another chief;—and so we were led from lodge to lodge, till we had partaken of about a dozen feasts. At last we returned to the lodge of Siskatuppe, and, having wrapped ourselves in our blankets, and laid ourselves down on mats on the ground, were soon in the land of visions.



May 8th.—Early in the morning we were awakened by the shrill voices of the Pawnee women, who were engaged in cleaning up the lodge, and collecting their hoes, previous to their going out to the fields to prepare the ground for planting corn. Our breakfast being over, and having had our animals brought from the pasture, we, together with the gentleman from Fort Kearney and his interpreter, started for the upper village, distant about 25 miles, accompanied by our old friend Gatarritatkutz and another Pawnee. Our road was again for several miles across the high prairie. We then descended into the bottom prairie of the Platte, travelling about five miles in sight of the river, when we made a halt near the stream in order to prepare dinner. The situation here pleased us very much, as very suitable for a mission station, should the Pawnees be permanently located where they at present reside. The timber on the islands in the Platte is very easily obtained here. The prairie bottom is from two to three miles wide, gently ascending to the bluffs, and extends about ten miles along the Platte, before the bluffs again approach the river. A mile or two from where we took our lunch a beautiful spring of never failing water gushes forth from the bluff. After dinner, having permitted our animals to graze a while, we proceeded on our journey, travelling partly on the high prairie, after ascending the bluff, and partly in the bottom. At a certain place, as we were travelling along, we noticed, that our Pawnee friends rode aside to a spot, where their attention seemed to be rivetted upon something on the ground. Inquiring what it was, they informed us, that at that place about nine or ten months ago, a Sioux chief had been killed by the Pawnees. It seems, he had made a hostile incursion upon the Pawnees, with a company of his people, and having found some squaws engaged at work in their fields, he had killed them. The Pawnees, irritated at this unprovoked attack, immediately made up a party, who hotly pursued their enemies, and, the horse of the Sioux chief being wearied, and not able to keep up with the rest, he called to his men: "Stop not for me, but save yourselves; I shall die fighting." His pursuers soon came up with him and killed him, fighting bravely. The spot where he had been killed still presented the marks of Indian barbarity; stones, arrows, and small pieces of the skull, which had been cleft by their tomahawks, lying around,—the bones having been carried away with the carcass by the wolves of the prairie. We turned away in disgust from a place, which had been the scene of such a barbarous atrocity, praying only the more fervently to the Lord, that the passions of these poor people might be softened down



by the all-subduing influence of His blessed gospel, through the happy effects of which *alone*, we have been made to differ.—

As we were approaching the upper village we observed sentinels standing on the highest bluffs, posted there, it seems, to watch the approach of any strangers. The first that we observed was at a distance of five miles from the village. In the bottom prairie, numbers of ponies, the property of the village, were grazing, watched by women and children. As we approached the village, young men and boys joined our caravan, and when at last we arrived there a dense crowd of children surrounded us, eager to see the visitors of their village, so that it was necessary for a chief to come to our aid, who opened a way through the immense throng for our wagon to proceed on to the lodge, where we were to put up. We were here, as well as at the other village, struck with the large proportion of children, a circumstance not generally observable among Indians. Mr. Allis informed us that visiting them a few months previous (the smallpox having appeared among some of the Indian tribes) he had vaccinated about 1,500 under 14 years of age (in a population of hardly 6,000); the last time that the whole tribe had been vaccinated, having been 14 years ago.

The village stands on a rising ground, about three miles from the river, and consequently the same distance from the nearest timber. In a valley near by flows a beautiful stream, from which the people of the village are supplied with water.

The lodge, where we were to remain, was the medicine lodge of the village, and just as we entered it we found a company of about a hundred men engaged in dancing a *medicine* dance, in order to propitiate the Great Spirit, to grant them prosperity in the approaching buffalo-hunting season, and protection from their enemies. Their naked bodies were painted in the most grotesque manner, their hair and weapons plumed with eagles' feathers, and thus armed with bows and arrows, spears, and shields, they were dancing to the beat of the drum, intermingled with songs. Their yells rent the air, while the very earth seemed to shake under their feet. After we had sat in the lodge a few minutes, a dense crowd of two or three hundred children filling up the space at the entrance, whose curiosity was probably more attracted by us than by the dancers, a chief came forth from the dancing party, with a whip in his hand, at sight of whom the children made for the door, but as it took some time before the crowd could get out by the narrow opening he commenced plying his whip most unmercifully on the naked backs of the poor children till the entrance was cleared. We were then informed that on account of our arrival, out of deference to us, they would now dance outside; if, however, we

wished to look at them while dancing, we were welcome to come out and see them.—After a little while we went out and looked at them for some time, while they were engaged in these religious exercises. Our hearts melted, and our eyes filled with tears at the thought of the benighted state of their minds, living without *Christ*, and without *hope*. We were not long engaged in these mournful reflections, when a messenger arrived inviting us to a feast. We followed the messenger, who led us to a lodge, which we entered. Our host, who had prepared a feast for us, was no other than the chief of the Grand Pawnee Band, and principal chief of the whole Pawnee nation. He received us in a very warm and affectionate manner, embraced us, and welcomed us among his people. His name is Asseruregar-rigu;—he seems to be extremely old, on the verge of the grave, yet, in spite of his great age, is still very much respected by his nation. After being invited to sit down on mats, a dish of green corn soup was placed before us, which was very palatable. The old man complained, that the corn had not been sufficiently boiled, as he had ordered it to be put over when he heard of our arrival, and had been anxious to be the first to welcome us by a feast.—

Our repast being finished, we were yet invited to several feasts prepared by the chiefs of the village, whereupon we returned to the medicine lodge. In the evening a council of the chiefs and braves was called, in order to inform them of the business upon which we had come to visit them. We were received in the most cordial manner, embraced by several of the chiefs, and after informing them of our object the principal chief of the Pawnee tribe, aforementioned, made a reply to the following effect: “It appears to me this evening as though I had been dead a long time and had suddenly to-day risen from the dead,—so glad am I to hear the news that teachers are willing to come among us, in order to live with us and instruct us. We shall welcome you among us, and the chiefs will see to it, that your property and cattle shall be protected;—I hope you will come *soon* to live with us. I am now a very old man,—I must soon go hence; therefore come *soon* that I may behold the missionaries living among my people before I die.” Speeches to a similar effect were then made by Leezikutz, chief of the Republican band, Terrericawaw, chief of the Topages (pronounced Tuppay) band, and two or three other inferior chiefs, which were all interpreted; and finally a chief named Lalogehanesarn (or Fatty, as he is called by the whites, from his corpulence, something very unusual among wild Indians) closed by making a long appeal to the chiefs, delivered in a very loud and sonorous voice, exhorting them to *keep* the prom-

ises which they had just made. "Don't cheat," said he; "don't act deceitfully. You have now promised these men that if they come to live among us you will take them under your protection, and will always restrain your people from molesting their property. Remember this, and now since you have made these promises, see to it that you also keep them." The council then dispersed, not, however, before several chiefs had again embraced us, whereupon we laid ourselves down in our blankets upon the mats in the lodge for repose.

May 9th.—After breakfast we were invited to the principal chief's lodge, to attend a council which had been called for the purpose of listening to the invitation sent to them by the President of the United States through the above-mentioned agent, to attend a general council at Fort Laramie. The Pawnees declared themselves satisfied with the offers of government, and several speeches were then made expressive of the prospect that ere long the condition of their people would be bettered, especially since they might now indulge the hope of soon having teachers among them to give them instruction. During the council a severe thunderstorm was passing over, and while the chief, Fatty, was speaking, after a loud peal of thunder: "See," said he, "the Great Spirit is pleased with us this morning and expresses his satisfaction by speaking loudly to us!"—At the close we were yet invited to partake of a feast with them. A large dish of corn-soup was brought in and set before the chiefs;—the medicine man then came forward, and, taking a spoonful of the soup, went to the fire, and making a small hole in the ashes he poured it in. After putting the spoon back again into the dish he returned to the sacrifice at the fire, which was blessed thrice by holding both hands over it; then, turning round to the assembly, and fronting the chiefs, looking up to heaven, he stretched out his hands thrice in silent benediction, and then returned to his seat. The dish was then passed round, each person partaking of a mouthful or two of the soup.

The council being over, and the thunderstorm having somewhat subsided, towards noon we started on our return, the object of our visit to the Pawnee villages being now fully accomplished. We had now only to retrace our steps, as that was the nearest way for us to travel. We prepared our coffee and lunch at the same beautiful spot, where we had halted yesterday. In getting a fire, however, to boil our coffee, we had considerable trouble, the matches in our pockets being damp, and the grass and wood being all wet from the rain, which was yet falling. But at last our Pawnee friends succeeded in finding some dry rotten wood, which, by means of paper and powder, we succeed-

ed in igniting. In the evening we arrived at the Lower Village, where we staid over night at Siskatuppe's lodge.

May 10th.—Towards morning a very heavy thundergust passed over the village, and the water came pouring into the lodge, from the small opening above (which is made to let out the smoke), and the shrill voices of the women, who seemed to be scolding one another while engaged in cleaning up the water, disturbed us considerably in our slumbers. In the morning the Pawnees informed us that the Platte was rising; we, therefore, hastened to get ready for travelling, and crossed the river without much difficulty, in the same manner as at the first time. Arrived at the opposite bank, we made a present of some tobacco to our Pawnee friends, for assisting us in crossing the river. A large company of Pawnees followed us, who intended going to the Omahaw village in order to trade for corn. When we arrived at the ferry of the Elkhorn, a heavy gust was threatening to overtake us, and we had hardly crossed, secured our baggage, and got into the hut of the ferrymen, when a furious hail-storm passed over us. The rain having detained us so long, that it was impossible to reach another camping ground by daylight, we pitched our tent here for the night.

May 11th.—During the night, another gust passed over us, but our tent kept us dry and comfortable. One of the ferrymen, who had arrived during the night from Council Bluffs, informed us that the bridge across the Papilion, over which we had passed, had been washed away by the high water occasioned by the heavy rains, and that he had been obliged to swim the stream, which had swollen to the size of a river. We, therefore concluded to take another route, which would lead along a high ridge between the Great and Little Papilion, and strike the former opposite the Omahaw village, at the confluence of the two streams, where we hoped to get assistance, should we find any difficulty in crossing.

When we arrived at the place, we found both streams very much swollen by the heavy rains. Collecting some wood together, we made a fire, and prepared our dinner, while the party of Pawnees, who had followed us, were busied in crossing the Little Papilion, in order to get to the Omahaw village. After we had finished our meal, and had come to the crossing of the Great Papilion, preparations were made for getting our wagon, baggage, and ourselves on the other side and here we found Mr. Sharpee, who has travelled several times to the Rocky Mountains, and was accustomed to meet with such exigencies as the present, to be of invaluable service to us. Under his direction the tent-cloth was spread out on the ground, upon



which was placed the wagon-body. The corners of the cloth were then laid over the body, and around the whole a rope was tightly tied to keep the cloth firmly adhering to it. Thus a *boat* was soon constructed, in which the forewheels and tongue were put, and then launched in the stream, with Mr. Sharpee and Mr. Allis on board. A rope had previously been attached, the end of which an Indian took in his mouth, and swam across, the boat being drawn after him. The contents being quickly taken out on the other side, it was towed back again by the Indian with Mr. Sharpee still in it. The second load consisted of the hindwheels with Mr. Sharpee and br. Oehler. Meanwhile another Indian had formed a boat of a buffalo-skin, stretched out by sticks placed crosswise, in which the baggage was all safely transported to the other side. The animals were driven into the stream, and forced to swim across. Finally, the boat was brought over the third time, and br. Smith and a lame Pawnee man were taken to the other side. When the boat had made this its last trip, it had not leaked more than about an inch of water. During the whole time, while we were crossing, the rain was pouring down in torrents upon us. Having now safely gained the other shore with all our effects, and put everything in travelling order, we proceeded about three miles farther, when we came to a slough, which had also been filled up by the rains. It was impossible to ford it, at the place where the road led across. After reconnoitering a little, we found a place where the water was fordable, but with an almost perpendicular bank of about ten feet on the other side. The mules having been unharnessed, Mr. Sharpee and br. Oehler took them across, although they almost stuck fast in the mud Mr. Allis and br. Smith then pushed the wagon into the slough, thus forming a bridge for them to cross over. All hands were then employed in pulling the wagon out of the mud up the bank, till the end of the tongue reached the top, to which the doubletree was then tied. The mules being reharnessed, and all the other available muscular power being applied in pushing up the wagon, we finally succeeded in getting it up on the bank. We had now yet two miles to travel, in order to reach the Presbyterian mission station at Bellevue, and were truly thankful that there were no more streams or sloughs to cross. About sundown we arrived at our station, and were heartily welcomed by Mr. McKinney and the Mission family, though our outward appearance was not very prepossessing, our clothing being bespattered with mud, from the various adventures of the day.—

On the 14th of May the steamboat *El Paso* came up the Missouri to Council Bluffs, and on the morning of the 15th we



took passage in her down the river. On the evening of the 16th the boat arrived at Weston, and in the afternoon of the 17th left there for Kansas, where we arrived at dark. After breakfast on the following morning, the 18th, we proceeded to *Westfield*, eight miles, on foot, where we arrived just as the congregation were leaving the church after the service, which had been held by the national assistant, Frederic Samuel—truly thankful to the Lord to find all well at home, after an absence of nearly four weeks.

## DESCRIPTION

OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE PAWNEE INDIANS

(By BR. D. Z. SMITH.)

**BANDS OR CLANS.**—All the Indian tribes are subdivided into bands or clans. The *Pawnees* have among them four distinct bands, viz., the Loups (pronounced *Loos*), the Republicans, the Topages (Tuppays), and the Grand Pawnees. Each band has at its head a Chief, among whom, however, the Chief of the Grand Pawnees, Asseruregarrigu, is considered the Principal Chief of the whole tribe.

**VILLAGES, LOCALITIES, FORMER MISSIONARIES, &c.**—The Pawnees live in two villages at present, both on the South side of the Platte or Nebraska river. The lower village lies about 50 miles from Bellevue, and about 10 or 15 miles above the mouth of the Elkhorn river, the first important tributary of the Platte from the North; and the upper village is situated about 20 or 25 miles above the lower, nearly opposite the mouth of the Loup Fork of the Platte, the next branch of any consequence above the Elkhorn. Both villages are situated on eminences, so that the approach of an enemy can easily be observed, and a sharp lookout is constantly kept in order to guard against any sudden surprise from a hostile force. Sentinels are constantly posted on all the surrounding heights, who can immediately by signs, known among the Indians, transmit intelligence in case of impending danger. During the night, sentinels are constantly perched upon the tops of the lodges, to guard against any unexpected nocturnal attack. When we were on our return, and remained over night at the Loup village, a report, probably a false alarm, had reached there during the day, that a large war-party of Sioux had lately been seen near the head waters of the Elkhorn river. During the night sentinels were as usual posted upon the lodges, a little more noisy, however, than generally, yelling to one another and singing, nearly the whole night. Upon our inquiring why the sen-

tinels made so much noise, we were informed that it was to let the Sioux know, should they be near, that they might not expect to find them off their guard.

Thus it will be observed that a certain kind of military organization is constantly kept up at each village, rendered necessary by their wars with their enemies. This unpleasant state of things can only be removed through the benign influence of the Gospel, when "they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they *learn* war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and fig-tree; and *none* shall make them afraid." Mic. 4:3, 4.

As hinted in a note in a previous communication, the Pawnee villages are not located on their own land. Formerly the land on both sides of the Platte river belonged to them. But about the year 1835 they concluded a treaty with the United States, in which they ceded to the latter all their territory on the South side of the river. Their villages were then situated about 150 miles further up the Platte on the North side. The missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M. were then residing with them, their mission stations being situated in the vicinity of these villages. When the Pawnees were at their homes, which is only four or five months of the year (the remaining months being consumed on their summer and fall hunts), the missionaries were engaged in teaching such of their children as could be induced to attend school, and in instructing the people in the truths of religion, as well as they could according to their limited knowledge of the language. About six years ago, the powerful Sioux made repeated incursions into the Pawnee country, and the strength of the latter being very much weakened by their frequent wars with their enemies, they were obliged to succumb, and at length forced to leave their former location on the North side of the Platte, and to remove to the South side, nearer to the white settlements on the Missouri river. The missionaries, too, found it unsafe to remain, and it was thought advisable to suspend their missionary operations among them. Mr. and Mrs. Allis are remnants of this noble band of missionaries, and, still cherishing the desire, that these benighted but very interesting people might be enlightened by the gospel, have, while their fellow-laborers have long ago left for other fields of usefulness, still lingered behind—and toiled on, amidst many self-denials, privations and discouragements, in doing whatever lay in their power for the good of these Indians. Lately the government has established Fort Kearney, not far distant from their former villages, which, it is hoped, will be a

security against future incursions, and prove a safeguard, when our mission will once be established among them.

LANGUAGE.—The Pawnee language is said to be altogether different from the languages of the surrounding prairie tribes. The Otoes, the Ioways, the Osages, the Kansas or Caws, the Omahaws, the Puncaws, etc., seem all to speak dialects of the same language, the Dakota; while the Pawnee language seems, by its great difference, to point back to the earliest periods of the residence of the Indians in this country, when a disruption may have taken place, that formed them into a distinct nation.

POPULATION, LODGES, etc.—The lower village consists of about 80 lodges, with a population of nearly 2,500; and in the upper village there are between 140 and 150 lodges, the population amounting perhaps to 3,500. On approaching a village, the lodges have the appearance of so many small hillocks, of a conical form, huddled up together in the closest possible manner, with only narrow passages between for walking, and the rest of the space filled up by pens, formed of stakes, for confining their ponies during the night, to guard them from being suddenly taken off by a warlike party of another tribe.

The Pawnee lodges are of a circular form, large and spacious in the interior; many of them being 50 feet in diameter. Three and sometimes four circular rows of forked trunks of trees are placed upright, at appropriate distances from each other. The row nearest the centre consists of only four such upright timbers, about 15 or 20 feet high, while the crotches in the more exterior rows are shorter and more numerous, in proportion as the circumference is greater. These forks or crotches support thick crossbeams, upon which a frame of long poles is laid, extending from the ground at the outer circumference of the lodge to the top, leaving only an opening at the apex, of about four feet in diameter, to answer the double purpose of letting in the light, and letting out the smoke. Upon the frame work of poles, willow osiers are laid, and the whole is then covered with prairie sod from 12 to 18 inches thick. Immediately below the opening above, a hole is sunk in the centre for the fire-place, common to all the residents of the lodge. From five to ten families, generally related together, have a common occupancy of one lodge, governed by a head man, who may be styled the lodge chief. Around the circumference of the lodge are recesses for sleeping, partitioned off for each family, resembling the berths on board of steamboats, many of which are screened in front and on the sides by willow-twigs laid above each other, tied fast to a frame, which, partly with the reddish bark on, and partly white from having the bark taken off, exhibit considerable taste in those who wrought them.

When thus ornamented with twigs, a small opening about two by three feet is left in front to admit the occupants. The bottom of the berth is raised about two feet above the ground by means of large hewn sills, overlaid by thick willow twigs, which are then covered with buffalo-robcs. The entrance of the lodge is always on the East side, protected by a passage, closed above and on the sides, of about 15 feet in length—the door being a large buffalo robe, or several sewed together, hanging before the inner entrance. On the side opposite to the door of each lodge, a recess is reserved, for depositing the skull of a buffalo, surmounted by shields, quivers of arrows, spears, bows, skins, feathers, etc. used for hunting, for medicinal or religious purposes, as the case may require. In the intermediate space between the recesses and the fireplace, mats, about three by five feet, made of rushes, are laid, at convenient distances, for seats; while an extra supply of them, rolled up, and set aside at different places in the lodge, are reserved for extraordinary occasions, as for instance councils or feasts.)

SUBSISTENCE.—What the *seal* is to the Greenlander the *buffalo* is to the Pawnees and other Prairie Indians; and many of their songs, in which reference is made to the buffalo, show that this animal is held in high estimation among them. It will no doubt be a difficult undertaking to wean them from an occupation, which is at the same time a gratifying and exciting sport to them, and which imparts to an individual who distinguishes himself in its pursuit, a character of high standing among his tribe. The great scarcity of the buffalo, however, of late years, since the immense emigration to the far west, has pinched them with want and hunger, and it is evident that they cannot subsist much longer by depending mainly upon this animal as heretofore. This circumstance, though calling forth our warmest sympathies in behalf of their wretched condition, may perhaps be the means, in the hands of an Allwise Providence, of shaking that tenacity and attachment so strongly developed in the Indian character, for long cherished customs, and making them more pliable in adopting the arts of civilization. Their attention must soon be directed to agriculture and the raising of stock, or they must starve.

While on the hunt, in the buffalo country, the Pawnees generally have a good supply of fresh meat to subsist on. That portion of their meat which is intended to be jerked, in order to take home with them, they cut into narrow slips, and dry it over the fire, without any salt, where, by the action of the smoke and sun, it soon dries. Several slips are then plaited together, when it is put away into a skin, and reserved for future use. The reason why no salt is added is probably, first, because it is



a scarce article, and secondly, because anything that is salted and dried, imbibes moisture in damp weather, and sooner becomes rancid than meat dried without salt.

Besides the buffalo, as their main subsistence, they raise some corn, beans, and pumpkins. As they use no other agricultural implements than hoes, their fields are not very extensive. For suitable spots of cultivation they generally select the mouth of a ravine, or any spot where, by the washing of the rains, the ground has become loose and mellow, and consequently the sod may more easily be extirpated than in the prairies generally, where the ground can only be prepared by turning the thick sod by means of a large prairie plough, and three or four yoke of oxen.

Their fields are not enclosed by fences or any other kind of protection. Having no other stock but horses, which are constantly herded and watched during the day time, and shut up in enclosures in the village during the night, fences are unnecessary. While absent from their homes, their fields are subject to depredations from prairie wolves and deer, which however no ordinary fence could restrain. Because these poor people have no other agricultural implements than hoes, the spots which they are obliged to select for fields are often at great distances from each other, and frequently from five to eight miles from their village. When abroad, to prepare and plant them in the spring, and gather the corn in the fall, they are often exposed to attacks of their enemies. While the husband is watching from some neighboring eminence to guard against the stealthy approach of any hostile force, the wife is engaged in the labor of the field. With fear and trembling their field-labor is thus performed, and many a one, while so employed, is suddenly fallen upon and killed by a marauding party of enemies.

When we visited them, they particularly requested us "to beg their Great Father, the President, that he should be so kind and again break up some ground for them, as he had done in former years, that they might be able to plant more corn." We have brought in the petition of these destitute people before the proper Department at Washington, and it is greatly to be desired that our benevolent Government may do something for them in their wretched state.

As has already been remarked, they were in an almost starving condition when we visited them. The hunt had proved unsuccessful, so that in the lower village they had no meat whatever, and had to depend upon the little corn that they had raised the preceding year. In the upper village they were also

in a miserable condition, for, though they had yet a little dried buffalo-meat, the Sioux had during their absence on the hunt, destroyed their village (their present lodges had been rebuilt since their return) and carried off a portion of their corn, burnt another portion, and thus very little remained concealed in the "caches," which are made in their lodges.)

**HOSPITALITY.**—The Indian has always been renowned for his hospitality. This trait of character is noticeable among all the tribes. Thus the Pawnees, too, though in actual want themselves, showed their good will towards us by preparing for us the best they could afford. One chief placed before us, besides dried buffalo meat, a small dish of marrow, which by them is considered a great delicacy.

**LABOR.**—The more enlightened a people has become through the benign influence of religion, and the cultivation of the arts and sciences, the more the weaker sex attains to that rank in society, which the Creator intended for them; but the more debased and sunk in heathenism a Nation lies, the more is woman enslaved, and held in subjection. So among the Pawnees, too, the men are the lords, who, while they themselves are not disposed to do any work, and generally consider it a shame to labor, direct the women, as inferior beings, how everything must be done. The females, besides attending to the housework, generally incumbent upon their sex, are obliged to cut and carry all the fire-wood; prepare the fields for cultivation with their hoes, plant the corn, weed it, and finally, when ripe, gather it in; and take care of the horses of their lords, when not used by them.

The most difficult labor, however, that falls to their lot, is the erecting of their lodges. As the upper village had been burnt by their enemies during their absence, the labor of rebuilding of course devolved upon the poor women, and in the course of about two months, when we visited them, they had completed nearly 150 lodges. When we observed that the nearest timber to the site of the village was two or three miles off, and that they have no beasts of burden, but that all the building material, much of which is very heavy, was carried so great a distance on the shoulders of the women, it seemed almost incredible to us. We noticed even girls of 12 to 14 years bearing baskets on their backs, filled with wet turf, to cover or repair their lodges, which must have been very heavy. Thus early the females are trained to carry burdens (either at home or while travelling), which inures them to hardships, but at the same time deforms them, rendering them low and bent in stature, and pitiable objects to the beholder. While the men, trained to no work whatever, are erect, tall and well-proportioned in their

form, and almost feminine in their features, the women are short and low, with stooping gait, downcast looks, harsh features, and hair dishevelled; and dirty, ragged, and filthy in their appearance. Such is a picture of heathenism! Have we not cause to be grateful for the benign influence of the gospel upon our land, so that we are elevated far above such a miserable state of heathenism? Unto the Lord be all the praise!

Though it is generally a feature among heathen nations, that it is considered a shame for the men to labor, while all the work devolves upon the females, still the Pawnees seem not altogether indisposed to be instructed. Mr. Sharpee, who has been acquainted with them and other Indians in these parts for nearly 20 years, told us that the Pawnee men were unlike those of other tribes, since they were willing to lay hold of a plough or any other farming utensil, and only the instruction was wanting to make them industrious. Mr. Allis, too, who has been acquainted with them for the last 20 years, and has lived among them a great portion of this period, informed us that when the missionaries were formerly living among them, several of the Pawnees had already commenced the use of the plough. The good beginning was, however, interrupted by their missionaries having to leave them.

**DRESS.**—The dress of the men consists in nothing but a small piece of cloth, fastened around the middle. This, we observed, was generally the only covering they had on, when in their lodges. When abroad, they had a buffalo robe or blanket wrapped around them. The females are more decently clothed than the men. Their dress consists of leggings, generally made of scarlet cloth, over which a piece of blue or brown woolen cloth is tied around the waist, the ends lapping over each other and extending a little below the knees. The upper dress consists of a shirt, or short gown, made of calico, reaching to the middle. Over the whole a blanket or robe is slung, above which, on the back, may frequently be discovered the black sparkling eyes of a little "papoose" peering forth.)

**INTOXICATING DRINK.**—It is somewhat remarkable that the Pawnees are not so fond of "fire water" as other tribes, who are fast dwindling away from the demoralizing and debasing effects of intoxicating drink. Nothing, perhaps, has aided more in diminishing the population of different Indian tribes, than spirituous liquors. To the missionary it is always gratifying and encouraging to observe, when a tribe takes a bold stand against the introduction of this destructive poison. The Pawnees allow none to be brought into their villages.

**BURYING THEIR DEAD.**—On the highest mounds in the prairie, we often observed little hillocks of earth, which we were



informed were the places of sepulture of their chiefs and others of their tribe. A tall bush was frequently stuck in the ground, to designate the spot. We were also informed, that among the Pawnees and other wild tribes the cruel practice prevails, when they are on their hunt, and their old people get so feeble, that they can no longer accompany them, of leaving them behind, and even burying them alive.—In allusion to this fact Mr. Allis, pointing to their old and feeble chief, addressed the other chiefs as follows: "I have learned that you intend to put aside your old chief, because he is now feeble and sickly, and perhaps you will even think of burying him, when he can no longer follow you; but I want you to take care of him. He has been like a father to you. When he was yet strong, you know his kettle was always over the fire with plenty. He has always been a friend of the whites, and you ought to esteem him for the services he has rendered your nation, and not to bury him before he is dead."

More might be added, to show the wretchedness of their present state, but we should fear to become too tedious. Sufficient, however, has been said to prove that these poor people need the assistance of missionaries to better them in their outward condition. But, when we consider their spiritual destitution—their ignorance darkness and superstition—

Shall WE whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high,  
Shall WE to men benighted  
The lamp of life deny?"

"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." But "how shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:13, 14). In the face of all difficulties, let us not be deterred from bringing the glad tidings of Salvation to these benighted savages; thereby perhaps paving the way for still more extensive operations among the aborigines of our country; and thus, by breaking unto them the bread of life, proving the means of repairing, in part, the numberless wrongs inflicted upon this poor abject race, by people who call themselves christians.





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